

The Multidisciplinary Approach to Treating Heart Failure

Because heart failure is a complex disease, the Cardiovascular Center uses a multidisciplinary team approach. This team includes cardiologists, surgeons, advanced practice nurses, staff nurses, a dietitian, a social worker and a pharmacist.

Most patients are treated with medications and diet/lifestyle modifications, but for some patients that is not enough. If a blockage is found in the arteries feeding the heart, the patient is evaluated for the best procedure to relieve the blockage. Patients will undergo either a procedure called angioplasty and stent placement or surgery to relieve the blockage.

Heart transplantation is an option for people with advanced heart failure who cannot be treated by medications and diet/lifestyle modifications. Currently, some people with advanced heart failure rely on implantable mechanical assist devices to support the failing heart. These devices are used mainly in critically ill patients awaiting heart transplantation. Heart transplantation is a limited option, as a result of inadequate availability of donor hearts.

Clinical Services

The Advanced Heart Care Program provides many different levels of services and treatment options. The clinic offers standardized medical management and surgical referrals for valve repair, valve replacements, mechanical devices or heart transplantation, including:

- Outpatient infusion clinic
 - Nurse-On-Call program
 - 1-800-347-9054 emergency call number
 - Opportunities to participate in drug and device research
 - Individualized education programs
 - Individualized medication management
 - Individualized dietary management
 - Advice on weight management
 - Advice on exercise guidelines
 - Counseling on lifestyle modifications
 - Counseling on how to cope with heart failure
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Benefits

- Improved symptom management for patients
- Improved quality of life for patients and families
- Individualized plan of care for each patient
- Decreased admissions and readmissions to hospital
- Decreased emergency room visits
- Decreased health care costs